

Malaysia a multi-cultural country

Countries



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Malaysia is a tropical country with around 25million people. Malaysia located at Southeast Asia, peninsula bordering Thailand and Northern one-third of island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia, Brunei, South China Sea and South of Vietnam. Malaysia separated in two islands just similar as New Zealand, the only difference is West and East Malaysia and they are sharing the island with other countries as has mentioned before. The capital city (Kuala Lumpur) is located in West Malaysia, and Sabah (Borneo) and Kuching (capital city of East Malaysia) are located in Sarawak (East Malaysia).

The major religious in Malaysia are Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, and Hindu. Malaysian official language is Malay, and English the second. Apart from Chinese, Indian and Malay, there are several native cultural such as Iban, Bidayuh, Kadasan, and so on. This essay is going to give the foundation idea of three main cultural and also a briefly talking about Iban people. Malay or Melayu called themselves the “ bumiputeras” in Malaysia, bumi in Malay language means earth, and putera means prince or son. Overall it means “ The Son of Earth”.

The population has consisted around 60% (including indigenous people of the land) and the other cultural are consisted the rest of the percentage. Most of Malays in Malaysia are Muslims. If anyone has fall in love and want to be married with Muslim, he or she will be forced to become a Muslim. Or else the Muslim parents in law or even the Muslim community would not accept this marriage. I had a Chineseteacherwhen I studied in Malaysia; she has married to my Muslim teacher who taught me Malay language.

She was an atheist, she did not join any religious but because of the marriage she had to join the Muslim. I asked her before about if she is regretted, but she told me she will not regret of what she has chosen. "I am not, and I will not regret as long as I am with my husband," my Chinese teacher said that to me. Therefore I personally think that she is a brave lady, because she has to change her eating habit. Eating or touching pork and dog (especially their wet nose and faces) are forbidden for Muslims. The Malay words "tidak suci". Tidak means not, and suci means pure.

Therefore if any Muslim has touched these animals would consider as unclean or impure. They believe that they would need to renew their ablution or change their clothes as the spit of the dog can contain some impurities. There is a specific reason of why Muslims having this rule, Islam (Muslim) teaches how to attain the virtues and how to give up bad habits because both good and bad grow in the man according to his upbringing, education and environment. Ramadan (Arabic language) means the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Every year around that month, Muslim would be Fasting or dieting.

Fasting breaks into three abstains, which are food and drink, sexual intercourse, and masturbation (most scholars said that this is not allowed even when not fasting). Muslims eat once before the sun rise and another one after the sunset. After the sunset, they could eat if they have done their prayer. Muslims are recommended to eat dates before breaking the fasting. For the Muslims who are sick or pregnant, there is no way to escape the Ramadan fasting. However, they could postpone the Ramadan fasting period. As long as to ensure they will do it for a month or at least 29 days.

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There is no official date for celebrating the Break Ramadan Festival; it depends on the moon after 29 or 30 days. It quite often happens during the student's long break for the year around December. Chinese (known as Malaysian Chinese) are the second main cultural in Malaysia, they were originally from China. British brought them from Southern China for work-force in tin mining between the fifteenth and the mid-twentieth century's. Most Chinese are very successful in the business or trading area, if you have visited in Malaysias most of the department stores or shops are owned by Chinese.

They are the richest when it comes to a comparative between the different cultural. Malay is the official language; however it is unsurprised that Chinese are still speaking their languages. Chinese language divides in Cantonese, Hokkien, Foochow, Hakka, etc. All those languages could identify which place they were from origin. Most of Chinese are Buddhists and Taoism, a few percentages of Christians and a little percentage of Muslims. Malaysian Chinese do celebrate Chinese New Year; the public holiday is normally three to four days.

For more days of holiday, the Chinese schools would have to write the letter to get the permission from Ministry of Education. Before the first day of Chinese New Year, all the Chinese recommend to be at home for dinner at night. It means a family reunion after the busy days with working for whole year, but not many Chinese could make it because they have their different reasons. It could be because some of the people are working far away from home, and they do not have holiday so they could not make it. Why do Chinese celebrate the Chinese New Year?

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There is a legendary story of a long time ago, Chinese were living in peacefully in town but suddenly a wild animal called “ Nian” (it spells as “ Knee-Yen” in English), Nian by itself means year. People called it Nian because it came once a year to attack or eat people. Once, somehow a man discovered that Nian scared of something red in colour and a loud sound of beating. So every around that day, people would wear red clothes and red decoration around house such as red lanterns. Nian came and saw the town is full of red and also heard the sound of beating or banging sound.

Year by year has passed, Nian does not come anymore. Chinese were very happy and excited; they could not believe their eyes. That is how Chinese New Year came from; Chinese celebrates it with the lion dance and wears red. The house is full of red decorations, through generations people changed the style of decoration. They make it prettier and stylish.

Nowadays, people could not care less about Chinese New Year. It does not matter if they do not wear red clothes during the first day of the Chinese New Year. Some people that dislike the red colour have decided to wear in pink or other colourful clothes.

People created Lion dance to celebrate their happiness and they used drums and gongs to make the loud sound instead of other way like using the wood stick to beat the cooking pots. Malaysian Indians were also brought by British to work in rubber plantations. Most of them were originally Southern Indian. The overwhelming majority of migrants from India were ethnic Tamil. If you have seen Tamil, their skin tones are definitely darker than other Indians. Most of them are Hinduism, and some of them are Christians and Muslims. Malaysian Indians celebrate Deepavali (Festival of Lights) once a year.

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In Hinduism, Indians celebrates the return of Lord Rama to his kingdom after defeating Ravana (the demon king). A long time ago there lived a cruel King who often killed many people without a special reason. Because many people were killed, the rest of the people were so terrified so they prayed to the Lord Ravana and hoped to get helped. Why it is called The Festival of Lights? Because long time ago people were warmly welcoming the return of Lord Rama with all the candle lights, it was very dark in the night. The celebration of Deepavali lasts six days, beginning on the 12th day of the month (North Indian lunar calendar).

According to the Hindu Lunar Calendar, Deepavali is celebrated for 5 days. It is a public holiday in Malaysia as well, this year the public holiday will be on fifth of November. Most of Hinduism does not eat beef; I heard my Hindu said that they think the cow is a holy animal that has been given from God. Iban also known as “Sea Dayak”, they used to live in a long wooden house aside the rivers or coasting area and living by fishing, farming and hunting. Talking about hunting, they were traditionally head hunters. Long time ago, they used to collect skulls and hung it up to the ceiling.

That were from the old days, Iban men would have a fight for a land, they not only win land through the battle, but they win for preserve the land. The winner wins the head off of the loser, and people would treat and respect him as a hero. However it is forbidden to do that activity now and they are very friendly and hospitable. Apart from Malay language, most of them could speak English because it is an international language. Some of Iban people even speak mandarin well; because they have been studied in a Chinese primary school before.

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Iban people have a big celebration which is Gawai (Harvest Festival), is one of the big ceremonies or occasions. The day is coming soon this year, and it is a public holiday in East Malaysia only. It will be celebrated on the first of June. That is when it comes to the harvest season, they would celebrate it with “Tuak”. It is handmade sweet rice wine. If you come to visit them, by the entrance they would serve you Tuak and you better do not refuse to have it. Or else they would think you are not respecting their kind offer.